

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. An apparatus for performing a surgical procedure comprising:
 - 2 an inner cannula having an elongated body and a tip positioned at a
 - 3 distal end of the elongated body; and
 - 4 an outer expandable sheath disposed about the inner cannula and
 - 5 configured to expand in an outward direction responsive to the
 - 6 tip of the inner cannula passing through the sheath.
- 1 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the tip has an outer dimension greater
- 2 than an inner dimension of the sheath and includes:
 - 3 a proximal tapered end for facilitating passing of the tip through the
 - 4 sheath.
- 1 3. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the tip is transparent and the apparatus
- 2 further comprises:
 - 3 an endoscope disposed within the cannula for providing endoscopic
 - 4 visualization of the surgical procedure through the transparent
 - 5 tip.
- 1 4. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the outer expandable sheath further
- 2 comprises:

3 a first shell and a second shell adjacently aligned along longitudinal
4 edges thereof, and

5 a resilient connector attached between the first and second shells for
6 resiliently urging the longitudinal edges of the shells together.

1 5. The apparatus of claim 4 in which the outer expandable sheath further
2 comprises:

3 a retainer disposed near at least one of proximal and distal ends of the
4 shells for retaining the shells against relative longitudinal
5 movement during passage of the inner cannula through the
6 outer expandable sheath.

1 6. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the inner cannula and outer expandable
2 sheath are separable to allow the outer expandable sheath to remain in place at a
3 surgical site as the inner cannula is withdrawn.

1 7. The apparatus of claim 4 wherein the resilient connector resiliently urges a
2 distal end of the first shell toward a distal end of the second shell to form an inner
3 dimension at the distal end of the outer expandable sheath smaller than the outer
4 dimension of the tip in the absence of an outwardly expansive force applied to the
5 distal end of the outer expandable sheath in response to the tip passing through the
6 distal ends of the shells.

1 8. The apparatus of claim 7 wherein the outer expandable sheath further
2 comprises:

3 a second resilient connector disposed to resiliently urge a proximal
4 end of the first shell toward a proximal end of the second shell
5 to form an inner dimension at the proximal end of the outer
6 expandable sheath smaller than the outer dimension of the tip
7 in the absence of an outwardly expansive force applied to the
8 proximal end of the outer expandable sheath in response to the
9 tip passing through the proximal ends of the shells.

1 9. The apparatus of claim 7 in which at least one of the shells of the outer
2 expandable sheath is flexible to bend in response to passing of the tip through the
3 outer expandable sheath.

1 10. The apparatus of claim 1 in which the tip further comprises a distal tapered
2 end, a proximal tapered end, and an enlarged intermediate portion having an outer
3 dimension greater than an inner dimension of the sheath for exerting lateral
4 expansion force against the outer expandable sheath responsive to passage of the
5 tip through the outer expandable sheath.

1 11. An elongated cannula for performing endoscopic procedures comprising:

an instrument lumen within the cannula having an access port positioned at a proximal end of the cannula for receiving instruments into the instrument lumen;

an endoscopic lumen disposed within the cannula;

a wire lumen within the cannula;

a wire positioned within the wire lumen having a distal end attached to a distal end of the cannula; and

an articulating lever positioned near the proximal end of the cannula attached to the proximal end of the wire, for tensioning the wire in a first position to deflect a distal portion of the cannula out of alignment with a proximal portion of the cannula, and for relaxing the wire in a second position of the lever to orient the distal portion of the cannula substantially in alignment with the proximal end of the cannula.

1 12. The elongated cannula according to claim 11 including an endoscope
2 disposed within the cannula including an endoscopic eyepiece disposed near a
3 proximal end of the endoscope in skewed angular orientation relative to the
4 elongated cannula and out of alignment with the access port of the instrument

- 5 lumen and lever to avoid spatial interference of the eyepiece with the lever and
- 6 with instruments received in the instrument lumen.